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AUTHOR Reidy, Edward F., Jr.: And Others
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ABSTRACT

The Fitchburg, Massachusetts, school system's writing program designed to meet the requirements of the commonwealth's Basic Skills Improvement Policy is discussed in this paper. The skills sequences that were selected for use in the areas of composition (levels kindergarten through grade 12) and mechanics and usage (levels two through nine) are listed. The methods for evaluation of each of the sequences are discussed and the following materials are provided: writing sample topics: analytic rating sheets for writing samples (levels two through twelve) and explanations of the composition rating categories (levels four through six): a sample page from the mechanics and usage test: a sample student achievement report for the mechanics and usage test: and samples of class diagnostic summaries in both composition and mechanics and usage. (MKM)

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FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING PROGRAMS

FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

WRITING

Edward F. Reidy, Jr.
JoAnne Eresh
Richard C. Wallace, Jr.

CS205963

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THE ASSESSMENT OF WRITING FOR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The Assessment of Writing for the Enhancement of Student Learning

JoAnne Eresh and Edward F. Reidy, Jr.
Fitchburg Public Schools

Lately, Massachusetts' public schools have been grappling with several new problems as they attempt to implement the Commonwealth's Basic Skills Improvement Policy. In the midst of declining enrollments, reductions in the teaching force, severe budget caps, diminishing respect for professional educators, and the cloud of teacher-burnout, the temptation to comply with the dictates of that policy only in a minimal, legalistic sense is attractive. Avoiding this temptation, however, is critical to the long term success of the public schools. Accordingly, the Fitchburg School System is attempting to capitalize on the opportunity for excellence provided through this policy by implementing a composition program entitled Skills Achievement Monitoring in Writing (SAM-Writing). SAM-Writing is a teacher-constructed program designed not just for students in academic jeopardy, but for all students. This program provides a developmental sequence of skills to be taught and learned, a means of directly assessing student writing, and a method of providing support to teachers as they teach writing.

SAM-Writing is based on the belief that all students are capable of some degree of excellence in written communication. By providing focused instruction, sufficient time on the learning task, and high expectations for student achievement, effective learning is fostered. Our teachers have decided on specific skills which should be taught at each of twelve levels, a decision which encourages a structuring of instructional time in which to teach such skills; and our teachers have devised a system of monitoring student skill development, a system which maintains instructional focus and encourages every student to strive for more effective writing.

Developing the Skill Sequences

The departure point for SAM-Writing was the delineation and adoption of specific skill sequences in composition and mechanics/usage. In June, 1979, a committee composed of teachers from the primary grades, from the intermediate grades, and from the secondary grades and the director of Fitchburg's Project Competency met for two days to draft the skill sequences and to discuss the coordination of the writing activities developed and pilot-tested during the previous year.

The committee's first decision was to make a clear distinction between compositional skills, i.e. organization, style, and choice of language, and mechanical skills. It was felt that the historical mixture of these two different aspects of the writer's craft had resulted in an excessive and improper emphasis

on mechanics/usage instruction. Furthermore, in a baseline assessment of student writing (Pedulla and Reidy, 1977), student papers were analytically rated on four traits: organization, style, choice of language, and mechanics. Mechanics emerged as a relative strength. Based on the above Fitchburg data, based on the accumulated research of over sixty years that a command of grammar and mechanics/usage skills does not insure good writing (Colb, 1974), and based on our philosophical conviction that adherence to mechanical conventions represents but one small aspect of good writing, we felt the need for a much stronger instructional focus on compositional skills. By dividing mechanics/usage skills from compositional skills we felt we could encourage that stronger focus.

Compositional Skills

To compose a sequential list of compositional skills for grades one through twelve would have been completely intimidating had we not been aware of the work done by Mr. James Temmallo, Curriculum Coordinator in Language Arts for the Chelmsford School System. Chelmsford's curriculum provided an ideal model for our needs. The compositional skills are described clearly, they are kept to a manageable number per level, and they build progressively from kindergarten through grade twelve. After extensive discussion and much tinkering, the committee adapted these compositional skills for use in Fitchburg.

Mechanics/Usage Skills

Our next task was to assemble a list of mechanics/usage skills. We had several specifications in mind. We wanted the list to be discrete; we hoped to assign specific skills to each grade level, so as to discourage the tendency of each teacher in each grade to teach every mechanical skill from capitalizing the personal pronoun to correctly using the semi-colon. We know that teachers always reviewed skills which students' writing showed were not learned, but we also wanted to encourage specific focus on new skills every year.

Again we were fortunate to have a basis from which to work. Several minimum skills committees had been in existence in various schools throughout our system. These groups had already generated lists of grade level mechanics/usage skills, and these were collated and combined. This yielded a master list consisting of nine levels which served as the draft of the system's curriculum in mechanics/usage skills.

Reaching Consensus on the Skill Sequences

Once the draft skill sequences were completed, the next step was to present them to the system's teachers. At the high school level the skill sequences were accepted by the faculty in early summer, 1979. At the junior high level implicit approval was secured when one junior high elected to participate in the 1979-1980 SAM-Writing Pilot Program. Our other junior high approved the mechanics/usage skills with slight modifications,

but elected not to use the compositional skills for the 1979-1980 school year. At the elementary school level, three meetings were held in September, 1979; one for teachers in grades one and two, another for teachers in grades three and four, and still another for teachers in grades five and six. At these meetings the skill sequence lists were distributed for reactions and any suggested changes. With slight modifications both the compositional and mechanics/usage skill sequences were accepted by the elementary school teachers.

Monitoring Student Achievement

Having reached consensus on our skill sequences, we then devised our monitoring procedures which are based on our previous experiences with small field tests. Since we had two very different skill sequences, we developed two different monitoring approaches.

Monitoring the Compositional Skills

Classroom teachers monitor compositional skills by analytically rating formal writing samples four or five times annually. Rating sheets for each level are based on the skill sequence lists for composition. These sheets call for rating discrete compositional skills taken from the corresponding level of the compositional skill sequence. In addition they include five rating categories in mechanics/usage. Although the focus in rating student papers is on organization, style, and choice of language, mechanics are not ignored.

Each rating category is given a rating of 4 (Excellent), 3 (Good), 2 (Fair), or 1 (Poor). For example, a rating of "3" for the rating category, "uses specific for general words," would indicate that the student's use of specific words is considered good. Similarly, a rating of "1" would indicate that the student's performance on that rating category is considered poor. Four rating values are used to discourage fence-sitting so as to force the reader into a decision.

Analytic scoring is used to provide both teachers and students with skill-referenced feedback on those skills useful in the production of effective writing. Although we firmly believe that the whole is more effective when it is greater than the sum of its parts, we also believe that the writer must be able to manipulate the parts to create the greater whole. For this reason holistic scoring, which provides a rating on the total effect of the paper, was not seen as appropriate for SAM-Writing.

Once a student's paper is rated, it is placed in a writing folder along with the rating sheet. At the end of the year the folder is passed on to the student's next teacher. Writing folders are always available to parents who are encouraged to review their child's writing with her or his teacher.

Furthermore, a copy of the rating sheet is sent to the data processing office. The information on the rating sheets is then keypunched so that a class diagnostic summary can be

prepared for each teacher. The teacher uses this report, along with information from the individual rating sheets and other information he or she may have gathered on her or his students, to gauge progress and plan instruction. It must be emphasized that teachers make inferences about student achievement. They do not rely solely on rating sheets or formal tests. Accordingly, teachers are encouraged to use the information provided through SAM-Writing in conjunction with other information for their instructional planning.

Monitoring the Mechanics/Usage Skills

The mechanics/usage skills are monitored by means of computer-scored tests, administered three times a year. These tests differ for each level in that they specifically test the skills assigned to that level. Each test taps all the skills included in its respective level. There are three equivalent test forms for each level so that no student will take the same form more than once in a given year.

After each test administration student answer sheets are sent to the data processing office for scoring. Two types of reports are produced: one, a student achievement report for each student; the second, a diagnostic summary for the classroom teacher. Student reports are typically kept in students' writing folders so that progress can be charted through the year.

Again, it is emphasized that SAM data are considered indicative, not definitive. They are used to supplement other teacher data for instructional planning purposes.

Teacher Support

A basic tenet of curriculum innovation is that even the best of programs will not be implemented in the classroom unless individual teachers are both comfortable with and have confidence in that innovation. The majority of our teachers are quite ready to teach mechanics/usage skills; our writing studies show the students have been learning these skills. It is the area of composition, however, in which teachers feel the need for support. Until recent years, little research has been done concerning the writing process and equally little has been done in teacher education courses on the teaching of writing. Even the writing background of secondary English teachers, those traditionally regarded as the writing experts, typically consists of perhaps a Freshman Composition course, maybe an Advanced Composition course, and the usual Methods of Teaching English course.

A standard method of assisting teachers to teach writing is to dictate the adoption of a composition textbook which all teachers are required to follow. This technique usually leads to the "if we're on page 296, it must be February" syndrone; more teacher time is spent in forcing the textbook to work efficiently than in encouraging students to write proficiently. Fitchburg has adamantly refused to employ this method.

It has been our experience that there is never one book that is appropriate for all teachers or all students. Strict adherence to a text tends to stifle creative and individual approaches to

teaching rather than to encourage elaboration. Many of our teachers do feel the need for help in teaching composition, however, and we have responded in two ways to this need: by supporting the creation of teacher-made resource materials and by offering various staff development activities.

Instructional Resources

SAM-Writing is a teacher-constructed program. Teachers have both developed the skill sequences and constructed the resource materials. Currently, the Fitchburg Public Schools has two compilations of composition resource materials: the Red Book, an intermediate grades resource guide, and the Blue Book, a secondary grades resource guide.

These books have acquired their titles of Red and Blue from the colors of their loose-leaf binders. The materials are enclosed in loose-leaf for a purpose; we intend to suggest by this format that pages should be deleted, added, or rearranged as each teacher deems suitable. The guides are meant to be an evolving resource, not a static one. From the numerous activities provided for each composition skill, teachers are encouraged to choose those activities he or she deems most useful.

Each book has been created by teachers in summer workshops. The Red Book has already been revised two times as the focus of the writing program has been clarified. Some teachers use this book as their major text, while others refer to it intermittently.

At Fitchburg High School the Blue Book is used in a similar fashion. More workshops are planned for future summers to provide materials for the lower elementary grades and to make further revisions in materials already produced.

We believe strongly that the practicing teacher, not the textbook publisher, is the one who is best able to assess her or his own classroom needs. It follows, then, that the teacher is also the best able to create materials to fulfill her or his needs. By providing teachers with time and clerical support, the school system has encouraged its teachers to draw from their own professional expertise to develop appropriate materials for their own use.

Staff Development

By itself, the provision of instructional resource materials is not sufficient. Teachers must feel confident not only to use such materials, but also to work beyond them, adapting and enriching them to suit their own teaching styles. If such adaptations are to occur, there must be a conducive environment in which teachers can experiment and learn. Through staff development sessions and activities, we have sought to involve teachers in the writing process as one step towards creating that conducive environment.

In the spring of 1980, the Fitchburg School System offered four different kinds of in-service workshops in writing. No attempt was made to use these workshops to dictate any one method

of teaching writing. The intent was to offer the best courses available, regardless of the writing philosophy of the instructor. We hoped that each teacher involved in the courses would then feel free to adapt the theories presented to her or his teaching style and classes. The workshops met for anywhere from one session to fifteen. The methods introduced ranged from the "Don Murray Writing Lab" approach taught by professional writing consultants, to "Short Writing Assignments for the Overburdened English Teacher" presented by a practicing teacher. A total of eighty-five teachers were involved in the in-service courses. The success of this staff development is partially to be seen in the requests from all teachers involved that more of these workshops be offered next year. The success of this program is also witnessed by the continuing rise in the quantity and quality of writing occurring within classrooms across the city.

The SAM Theory of Teacher Support

By offering as many diverse resources to our teachers as possible, we intend to encourage each teacher to assess her or his method of teaching writing and conception of the writing process. We have high regard for the professionalism of teachers and believe that each teacher, provided with the necessary resources of materials and knowledge, can decide on the most appropriate teaching method for her or his class. The SAM-Writing program asks for agreement on what skills are taught, but

not on how to teach them. In that area, each teacher is the best judge of how he or she is most effective in the classroom.

SAM Writing & Minimum Competency

To assume that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Basic Skills Improvement Policy was the prime motivator for the construction of SAM-Writing would be fallacious. The school system's own assessment of the writing ability of its students was the basis of our work. We believed that Fitchburg's students were not writing as well as could be expected. That belief spurred the system to action.

The implementation of the Basic Skills Policy does, however, add another ingredient to our writing recipe. SAM-Writing is a program aimed at all students, but the State now requires us to identify minimal competency skills and to certify each student as minimally competent three times during her or his school career.

SAM-Writing is a composition program designed to encourage students toward excellence, not merely competence,in writing. However, in the teaching of writing, basic skills must be introduced in addition to more sophisticated writing skills. That basic skills are only a portion of a good writing program is the basis of the method we have adopted in acceding to the demands of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy.

Throughout the school year as part of SAM-Writing, each student in grades two through twelve submits writing samples which are rated by the teachers. The skills rated at these times are

those provided for in our skills sequence and range from correct spelling to the use of sensory images. Some of the skills tested on the rating sheets are basic, others are more sophisticated. As explained earlier, a student's paper is rated on each skill on a scale of from one to four; one is described as poor, two as fair, three as good, and four as excellent. We have identified on each rating sheet certain skills as basic. When two of a student's papers receive ratings of 2 (fair) or above in the designated basic skills, those papers will be sent to a systemwide committee for a final reading.

The use of writing samples written as part of the ongoing instructional process will, we feel, provide several positive aspects. For example, rather than being offered only one opportunity to demonstrate competence in writing, the student will have twelve such opportunities. That is, a student may demonstrate competence in any two of the four writing samples in grade four, in grade five, or in grade six. These multiple opportunities will assure that no student feels the enormous pressure of producing on one day, three times during his school career, a writing sample which will determine his competence. Such a method will also alleviate the pressure on teachers in the key grades at which minimum standards are set. The typical sixth grade teacher, for example, will know that many of her students have met minimal competency standards for the intermediate grades at grades four and five. Those sixth graders who require extra attention will already be identified.

We intend, through SAM-Writing, to implement both the spirit and the letter of the Massachusetts Basic Skills Policy. We hope to assure that mandated testing will not be an addition to our writing program, but rather an integral, motivating part of the whole.

Conclusion

It is a common theory in literary analysis that the degree of restraint a writer places on her or his work is directly proportional to the creative force which enriches that work. The poet, for example, chooses a mode such as the sonnet because its strict structure enables her or him to unleash her or his creative power more effectively. As a program, SAM-Writing is a strict structure. It has evolved during a stressful period in public education by forging skill lists, instructional materials, and tests, items often seen by some as constraints on learning, into a sturdy framework. That framework, we believe, supports the striving of Fitchburg's students and teachers towards excellence in writing.

However, that framework will serve us well only if its component structures remain dynamic. The individual skills themselves may be changed as some are found to be inappropriate; the method or frequency of monitoring may be altered; and/or the types of teacher support may become more diverse. The capacity to encourage these modifications and refinements is and must continue to be the strength of SAM.

COMPOSITIONAL WRITING SKILLS, LEVELS 1-12

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMPOSITIONAL WRITING SKILLS

Level 1

Uses more specific for general words in speech.

Dictates two or more sentences in sequence.

Writes two or more sentences dictated by the teacher.

Writes a simple sentence.

Writes two or more related sentences.

Level 2

Uses specific for general words in writing.

Writes asking, telling, commanding and exclamatory sentences.

Writes several related sentences in sequence.

Level 3

Uses asking, telling, commanding, and exclamatory sentences in writing.

Expands oral and written sentences with adjectives.

Recognizes paragraph form.

Writes simple topic statements followed by several supporting sentences.

Level 4

Writes simple comparisons using <u>like</u> or <u>as</u>.

Expands written sentences with words and phrases that provide sensory detail.

Writes factual topic statements supported with sequential details that answer the question "WHAT?"

Level 5

Uses similes in writing.

Varies sentences in writing by changing position of word or phrase modifier.

Develops paragraphs with sequential sentences which answer the question "WHY?" or "HOW?" after the key word in the topic statement.

Uses transitions between sentences.

Level 6

Writes sentences reduced through the use of modifiers and connectives.

Develops an intensified and refined topic statement into a coherent paragraph.

Uses a concluding statement in a paragraph.

Level 7

Uses a variety of words in writing appropriate to the topic.

Writes sentences using a variety of specific concrete words.

Uses more complex sentences in writing.

Writes narrative paragraphs developed by chronological order and by order of importance.

Writes descriptive paragraphs, including sensory details, developed by order of location.

Level 8

Understands and uses connotation and denotation in writing.

Writes simple expository paragraphs.

Level 9

Uses various figures of speech in writing.

Places phrase and clause modifiers appropriately within sentences.

Writes paragraphs developed by comparison and contrast.

Develops a simple thesis statement in a multi-paragraph paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Level 10

Uses concise language, avoiding wordiness and cliches.

Writes sentences with proper coordination, subordination, and parallel structure.

Writes multi-paragraph papers with a strong thesis statement and clear transitions.

Level 11

Uses appropriate word choices.

Develops a detailed thesis statement in a multi-paragraph paper of comparison, contrast, and cause and effect.

Level 12

Writes multi-paragraph papers of definition and of inductive and deductive reasoning.

WRITING SAMPLE TOPICS

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WRITING SAMPLE TOPICS

1979-1980

STANDARD DIRECTIONS: You will have two class days to plan, to write, and to revise a paper on the topic given below. Be specific. Remember that how you write is more important than how much you write.

GRADE 3 TOPIC: We all have dreams while we sleep. Sometimes we forget what they were, but sometimes we remember them. A memorable dream may be funny or scary or just strange.

Write a story that begins, "I once dreamed that . . . ."

GRADE 5 TOPIC: We all have good days and bad days. There are special days that we wait for to arrive, and sometimes they're wonderful. Sometimes they're a disappointment. There are other days which we expect to be ordinary, and they turn out to be extraordinarily good or, sometimes, bad. Describe what in your life has been a day to remember.

GRADE 8 TOPIC: Many people look forward all year to Christmas, while others prefer the excitement of the Fourth of July. Describe your favorite holiday.

GRADE 10 TOPIC: Write about a childhood disappointment.

GRADE 11 TOPIC: Write about a friend or acquaintance you admire and respect but have always secretly envied. In your paper, work out a contrast between your life and his or hers.

RATING SHEETS, LEVELS 2-12

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

Teacher #_____ 1-5
Rating # 1 2 3 4 6

WRITING, LEVEL 2

NAME (LAST, FIRST):_____ 7-28

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
Level Two Skills					
1. Uses specific for general words.	1	2	3	4	29
2. Uses a variety of sentence kinds.	1	2	3	4	30
3. Writes several related sentences in sequence.	1	2	3	4	31
Mechanics/Usage					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	32
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	33
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	34
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	35
5. Correct sentence structure (fragments, run-ons).	1	2	3	4	36

COMMENTS:_____

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FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

Teacher #____ 1-5

WRITING, LEVEL 3

Rating # 1 2 3 4 6

NAME (LAST, FIRST):_____ 7-28

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
Level Three Skills					
1. Uses specific for general words.	1	2	3	4	29
2. Uses adjectives to enrich sentences.	1	2	3	4	30
3. Uses a simple topic sentence.	1	2	3	4	31
4. Uses supporting sentences to develop the main idea of a paragraph.	1	2	3	4	32
Mechanics/Usage					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	33
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	34
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	35
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	36
5. Correct sentence structure (fragments, run-ons).	1	2	3	4	37

COMMENTS:_____

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FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

Teacher #_____ 1-5

WRITING, LEVEL 4

Rating # 1 2 3 4 6

NAME (LAST, FIRST):_____ 7-28

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
Level Four Skills					
1. Uses specific for general words	1	2	3	4	29
2. Uses adjectives to enrich sentences.	1	2	3	4	30
3. Uses adverbs to enrich sentences.	1	2	3	4	31
4. Uses sensory details.	1	2	3	4	32
5. Uses simple comparisons.	1	2	3	4	33
6. Uses simple topic sentences.	1	2	3	4	34
7. Uses details to explain the main idea of a paragraph.	1	2	3	4	35
8. Places sentences in logical order.	1	2	3	4	36
Mechanics/Usage					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	37
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	38
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	39
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	40
5. Correct sentence structure (fragments, run-ons).	1	2	3	4	41

COMMENTS:_____

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FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

Teacher #_____ 1-5

Rating # 1 2 3 4 6

WRITING, LEVEL 5

NAME (LAST, FIRST):_____ 7-28

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
Level Five Skills					
1. Uses specific for general words.	1	2	3	4	29
2. Uses sensory details.	1	2	3	4	30
3. Uses similes in writing.	1	2	3	4	31
4. Varies sentences by changing position of word or phrase modifiers.	1	2	3	4	32
5. Uses transitions between sentences.	1	2	3	4	33
6. Uses simple topic sentences.	1	2	3	4	34
7. Uses supporting sentences to develop the main idea of a paragraph.	1	2	3	4	35
8. Places sentences in logical order within the paragraph.	1	2	3	4	36
Mechanics/Usage					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	37
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	38
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	39
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	40
5. Correct sentence structure (fragments, run-ons).	1	2	3	4	41

COMMENTS:_____

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FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

Teacher # _____ 1-5
Rating # 1 2 3 4 6

WRITING, LEVEL 6

NAME (LAST, FIRST): _____ 7-28

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
Level Six Skills					
1. Uses specific for general words.	1	2	3	4	29
2. Uses comparisons in writing.	1	2	3	4	30
3. Combines related ideas in compound sentences.	1	2	3	4	31
4. Uses descriptive words and phrases.	1	2	3	4	32
5. Uses transitions between sentences.	1	2	3	4	33
6. Uses accurate and appropriate topic sentences.	1	2	3	4	34
7. Uses appropriate concluding statements in paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	35
8. Places sentences in logical order.	1	2	3	4	36
9. Supports ideas with relevant details.	1	2	3	4	37
Mechanics/Usage					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	38
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	39
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	40
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	41
5. Correct sentence structure (fragments, run-ons).	1	2	3	4	42

COMMENTS: _____

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

WRITING, LEVEL 7

Teacher #_____ 1-5

Rating # 1 2 3 4 6

7

NAME (LAST, FIRST):_____ 8-29

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
COMPOSITION SKILLS					
1. Uses a variety of words appropriate to the topic.	1	2	3	4	30
2. Uses a variety of specific concrete words.	1	2	3	4	31
3. Uses complex sentences.	1	2	3	4	32
4. Uses appropriate order to develop the paragraph.	1	2	3	4	33
5. Uses transitions between sentences.	1	2	3	4	34
6. Uses accurate and appropriate topic sentences.	1	2	3	4	35
7. Uses concluding statements in paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	36
8. Supports ideas with relevant details.	1	2	3	4	37
MECHANICS/USAGE SKILLS					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	38
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	39
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	40
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	41
5. Correct sentence structure (fragments, run-ons).	1	2	3	4	42

COMMENTS:_____

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FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

WRITING, LEVEL 8

Teacher #_____ 1-5

Rating # 1 2 3 4 6

7

NAME (LAST, FIRST):_____ 8-29

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
COMPOSITION SKILLS					
1. Uses specific for general words.	1	2	3	4	30
2. Uses connotative and denotative words.	1	2	3	4	31
3. Uses complex sentences.	1	2	3	4	32
4. Uses appropriate order to develop the paragraph.	1	2	3	4	33
5. Uses transitions between sentences.	1	2	3	4	34
6. Uses accurate and appropriate topic sentences.	1	2	3	4	35
7. Uses appropriate concluding statements in paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	36
8. Supports ideas with relevant details.	1	2	3	4	37
MECHANICS/USAGE SKILLS					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	38
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	39
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	40
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	41
5. Correct sentence structure (fragments, run-ons).	1	2	3	4	42

COMMENTS:_____

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FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

Teacher #_____ 1-5

Rating # 1 2 3 4 6

WRITING, LEVEL 9 7

NAME (LAST, FIRST):_____ 8-29

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
COMPOSITION SKILLS					
1. Uses specific for general words.	1	2	3	4	30
2. Uses various figures of speech.	1	2	3	4	31
3. Places phrase and clause modifiers appropriately within sentence.	1	2	3	4	32
4. Uses a thesis statement.	1	2	3	4	33
5. Uses an introduction.	1	2	3	4	34
6. Uses an appropriate conclusion.	1	2	3	4	35
7. Uses subtopics effectively to contribute to the main idea.	1	2	3	4	36
8. Uses a variety of sentence structures.	1	2	3	4	37
9. Uses transitions.	1	2	3	4	38
10. Uses sentences in logical order within paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	39
11. Supports ideas with relevant details.	1	2	3	4	40
MECHANICS/USAGE SKILLS					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	41
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	42
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	43
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	44
5. Correct sentence structure (fragments, run-ons).	1	2	3	4	45

COMMENTS:_____

_____

_____

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

Teacher # _____ 1-5

WRITING LEVELS 10, 11, and 12

Rating # 1 2 3 4 5 6

NAME (LAST, FIRST): _____ 7-28

COMPOSITION SKILLS	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
1. The main idea or thesis statement is clear.	1	2	3	4	29
2. Subtopics are effectively used to contribute to the main idea.	1	2	3	4	30
3. Sentences are placed in logical order within each paragraph.	1	2	3	4	31
4. A variety of sentence structures is used.	1	2	3	4	32
5. Transitions are effectively used.	1	2	3	4	33
6. The vocabulary is rich and varied.	1	2	3	4	34
7. Concrete and specific details are used to illustrate points.	1	2	3	4	35
8. Basic organizational techniques are followed.	1	2	3	4	36
9. The writer has shown creativity in the approach to and handling of the topic.	1	2	3	4	37
MECHANICS/USAGE SKILLS					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	38
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	39
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	40
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	41
5. Correct sentence structure.	1	2	3	4	42

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING

PARAGRAPH RATING SHEET

Teacher # ____ 1-5

Rating # 1 2 3 4 5 6

NAME (LAST, FIRST): _____ 7-28

COMPOSITION SKILLS	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
1. Uses specific for general words.	1	2	3	4	29
2. Uses connotative and denotative words.	1	2	3	4	30
3. Uses compound sentences.	1	2	3	4	31
4. Uses complex sentences.	1	2	3	4	32
5. Uses appropriate order to develop the paragraph.	1	2	3	4	33
6. Uses transitions between sentences.	1	2	3	4	34
7. Uses accurate and appropriate topic sentences.	1	2	3	4	35
8. Uses concluding statements in paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	36
9. Shows creativity in the approach to and handling of the topic.	1	2	3	4	37
Mechanics/Usage					
1. Accurate punctuation.	1	2	3	4	38
2. Accurate capitalization.	1	2	3	4	39
3. Correct spelling.	1	2	3	4	40
4. Standard usage.	1	2	3	4	41
5. Correct sentence structure (fragments, run-ons).	1	2	3	4	42

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

AN EXPLANATION OF THE RATING CATEGORIES, LEVELS 4-6

WRITING -- LEVEL 4 COMPOSITION CRITERIA

1. Uses specific for general words.

The good writer usually avoids using general words such as *said*, *go*, *big*, *little*, *walk*, *run*, *went*, *good*, and *bad*. He exercises care not only in his choice of adjectives and adverbs, but also of nouns and verbs. For example, the sentence, "The shiny jet flew," could be better written as, "The shiny jet zoomed." In the same way, rather than using the phrase, "the big house," the writer may say, "the elegant mansion."

2. Uses adjectives to enrich sentences.

The good writer uses descriptive adjectives to make his ideas more clear. For example, the sentence, "The dog bit the man," may be written, "The fierce dog bit the frightened old man."

3. Uses adverbs to enrich sentences.

The good writer also uses adverbs to add force to his sentences. For example, the sentence, "The man jogged down the street," may be written, "The man jogged briskly down the street."

4. Uses sensory details.

The good writer includes descriptive details which help the reader to see, hear, smell, feel, or taste the thing described. For example, the sentence, "I got hurt when I climbed the tree," could be more effectively written as, "The bark scratched my hands and knees as I climbed the tree." Such a sentence would appeal to the sense of touch. An appeal to the sense of sound could be made by changing the sentence, "The sounds of Christmas morning made it impossible to hear my mother's directions," to, "My mother's call to come to breakfast was muffled by tearing paper, wind-up drummers, and clanging toy fire trucks."

5. Uses simple comparisons.

The good writer realizes that comparing two things often clarifies a description. Such comparisons may be quite simple and use the words *like* or *as*. For example, instead of writing, "My coach was nice to me," the effective writer may say, "My coach was like a father to me." In the same way, the sentence, "The grass is smooth," may be changed to, "The grass is as smooth as velvet."

6. Uses simple topic sentences.

A topic sentence is like an umbrella; it is designed to cover something. The good writer should be able to name at least three things that relate to the topic of the sentence he writes for the sentence to qualify as a topic sentence. For example, the topic sentence, "My father has had many jobs," may be followed by: "When he was a boy, he worked as a caddie. As he got older, he drove for the bus company. Today he works in a bank."

7. Uses details to explain the main idea of a paragraph.

The good writer uses examples to show what he means by his topic sentence. In the paragraph which begins with the topic sentence, "Several generals have become President," examples of generals who have become President - Washington, Grant. Eisenhower - would follow the topic sentence.

A good writer also understands that each paragraph may only include information relevant to the topic. For example, a paragraph on making a peanut butter sandwich should not include a sentence giving information about the current prices of peanut butter.

8. Places sentences in logical order.

A good writer will place his sentences in some sort of logical order. For example, a student explaining how to make a peanut butter sandwich may begin with an instruction to open the peanut butter jar and end with an instruction to eat the sandwich.

WRITING -- LEVEL 5 COMPOSITION CRITERIA

1. Uses specific for general words.

The good writer usually avoids using general words such as *said, go, big, little, walk, run, went, good,* and *bad*. He exercises care not only in his choice of adjectives and adverbs, but also of nouns and verbs. For example, the sentence, "The shiny jet flew," could be better written as, "The shiny jet zoomed." In the same way, rather than using the phrase, "the big house," the writer may say, "the elegant mansion."

Careful use of adjectives and adverbs also clarifies ideas. The good writer uses descriptive adjectives to make his ideas more clear. For example, the sentence, "The dog bit the man," may be written, "The fierce dog bit the frightened old man." The good writer also uses adverbs to add force to his sentences. For example, the sentence, "The man jogged down the street," may be written, "The man jogged briskly down the street."

2. Uses sensory details.

The good writer includes descriptive details which help the reader to see, hear, smell, feel, or taste the thing described. For example, the sentence, "I got hurt when I climbed the tree," could be more effectively written as, "The bark scratched my hands and knees as I climbed the tree." Such a sentence would appeal to the sense of touch. An appeal to the sense of sound could be made by changing the sentence, "The sounds of Christmas morning made it impossible to hear my mother's directions," to, "My mother's call to come to breakfast was muffled by tearing paper, wind-up drummers, and clanging toy fire trucks."

3. Uses similes in writing.

The good writer realizes that comparing two things often clarifies a description. Such comparisons may be quite simple and use the words *like* or *as*. For example, instead of writing, "My coach was nice to me," the effective writer may say, "My coach was like a father to me." In the same way, the sentence, "The grass is smooth," may be changed to, "The grass is as smooth as velvet."

4. Varies sentences by changing position of word and phrase modifiers.

A good writer will not always use the same sentence pattern repeatedly. The good writer will be able to change the position of his adverbs and prepositional phrases to provide variety in his sentences. For example, the sentence, "The hunter fearfully stalked the lion," may also be written,

"Fearfully, the hunter stalked the lion," or "The hunter stalked the lion fearfully." In the same way, the placement of a prepositional phrase can be varied; "I had arrived by that time," or "By that time, I had arrived."

5. Uses transitions between sentences.

The good writer will make an attempt to clarify relationships between his sentences. For example, the sentences:

Kathy set the table.
Kathy watered the plants.
Kathy mowed the lawn.

could be joined by transitions -

First, Kathy set the table. She *then* watered the plants. *Finally*, she mowed the lawn.

6. Uses simple topic sentences.

A topic sentence is like an umbrella; it is designed to cover something. The good writer should be able to name at least three things that relate to the topic of the sentence he writes for the sentence to qualify as a topic sentence. For example, the topic sentence, "My father has had many jobs," may be followed by: "When he was a boy, he worked as a caddie. As he got older, he drove for the bus company. Today he works in a bank."

7. Uses supporting sentences to develop the main idea of the paragraph.

The good writer uses examples to show what he means by his topic sentence. In the paragraph which begins with the topic sentence, "Several generals have become President," examples of generals who have become President - Washington, Grant, Eisenhower - would follow the topic sentence.

What is meant to be the main idea of the paragraph is usually suggested by a key word in the topic sentence. For example, in the topic sentence, "My brother sometimes treats me unfairly," the key word is *unfairly* The sentences following this topic sentence, then, should give specific examples of the brother's unfair treatment. Sentences which describe what the brother looks like, rather than how he acts, would not be supporting sentences.

8. Places sentences in logical order.

A good writer will place his sentences in some sort of logical order. For example, a student explaining how to make a peanut butter sandwich may begin with an instruction to open the peanut butter jar and end with an instruction to eat the sandwich.

1. Uses specific for general words.

The good writer usually avoids using general words such as *said, go, big, little, walk, run, went, good,* and *bad*. He exercises care not only in his choice of adjectives and adverbs, but also of nouns and verbs. For example, the sentence, "The shiny jet flew," could be better written as, "The shiny jet zoomed." In the same way, rather than using the phrase, "the big house," the writer may say, "the elegant mansion."

2. Uses comparisons in writing.

The good writer realizes that comparing two things often clarifies a description. Such comparisons may be quite simple and use the words *like* or *as*. For example, instead of writing, "My coach was nice to me," the effective writer may say, "My coach was like a father to me." In the same way, the sentence, "The grass is smooth," may be changed to, "The grass is as smooth as velvet."

3. Combines related ideas in compound sentences.

The good writer realizes that *related* ideas or details placed in separate simple sentences may be effectively combined into one compound sentence. A compound sentence consists of two complete sentences, both of which have different subjects and verbs, joined by a coordinate conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for).

For example:

- The phone rang. I answered it. = The phone rang, and I answered it.

  or

  I offered Bob some candy. He refused it. = I offered Bob some candy, but he refused it.

NOTE: Although writers should be encouraged to use compound sentences when appropriate rather than a string of simple sentences, the excellent writer understands that some compound sentences can be further reduced effectively. For example, the sentence, "The phone rang, and I answered it," may be reduced to, "I answered the ringing phone."

4. Uses descriptive words and phrases.

Careful use of adjectives and adverbs clarifies ideas. The good writer uses descriptive adjectives to make his ideas more clear. For example, the sentence, "The dog bit the man," may be written, "The fierce dog bit the frightened old man." The good writer also uses adverbs to add force to his sentences. For example, the sentence, "The man jogged down the street," may be written, "The man jogged briskly down the street."

The good writer includes descriptive details which help the reader to see, hear, smell, feel, or taste the thing described. For example, the sentence, "I got hurt when I climbed the tree," could be more effectively written as, "The bark scratched my hands and knees as I climbed the tree." Such a sentence would appeal to the sense of touch. An appeal to the sense of sound could be made by changing the sentence, "The sounds of Christmas morning made it impossible to hear my mother's directions," to, "My mother's call to come to breakfast was muffled by tearing paper, wind-up drummers, and clanging toy fire trucks."

5. Uses transitions between sentences.

The good writer will make an attempt to clarify relationships between his sentences. For example, the sentences:

Kathy set the table.
Kathy watered the plants.
Kathy mowed the lawn.

could be joined by transitions =

First, Kathy set the table. She *then* watered the plants. *Finally*, she mowed the lawn.

6. Uses accurate and appropriate topic sentences.

A topic sentence is like an umbrella; it is designed to cover something. The good writer should be able to name at least three things that relate to the topic of the sentence he writes for the sentence to qualify as a topic sentence. For example, the topic sentence, "My father has had many jobs," may be followed by: "When he was a boy, he worked as a caddie. As he got older, he drove for the bus company. Today he works in a bank." Furthermore, the good writer is also careful to employ a more accurate topic sentence. Thus, the topic sentence, "Television is fun," is refined to, "I enjoy watching a wide variety of television programs."

7. Uses appropriate concluding statements in paragraphs.

Good writers are aware that the concluding statement in a paragraph can repeat an important idea mentioned in the topic sentence. For example:

As he looked around, everything seemed distorted and strange. The trees seemed to have mirrors for leaves. The path he was following was curved and twisted, with no apparent direction. Everything seemed to move and sway dizzily. *This was the worst nightmare he had ever had.*

8. Places sentences in logical order.

A good writer will place his sentences in some sort of logical order. For example, a student explaining how to make a peanut butter sandwich may begin with an instruction to open the peanut butter jar and end with an instruction to eat the sandwich.

DIAGNOSTIC SUMMARY: COMPOSITIONAL SKILLS

SOPHOMORE/JUNIOR WRITING PROGRAM -- Mrs. ERESH . F PERIOD. ESSAY

01. THE MAIN IDEA OR THESIS STATEMENT IS CLEAR.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
1 POOR	1	3.85	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.17
2 FAIR	2	7.69	1	4.00	4	16.67	2	8.33
3 GOOD	21	80.77	15	60.00	17	70.83	2	8.33
4 EXCEL	2	7.69	9	36.00	3	12.50	19	79.17
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

02. SUBTOPICS ARE EFFECTIVELY USED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAIN IDEA.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	22	84.62	1	4.00	17	70.83	2	8.33
3 GOOD	4	15.38	20	80.00	7	29.17	12	50.00
4 EXCEL	0	0.00	4	16.00	0	0.00	10	41.67
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

03. SENTENCES ARE PLACED IN LOGICAL ORDER WITHIN EACH PARAGRAPH.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	1	3.85	0	0.00	1	4.17	1	4.17
3 GOOD	12	46.15	3	12.00	18	75.00	13	54.17
4 EXCEL	13	50.00	22	88.00	5	20.83	10	41.67
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

04. A VARIETY OF SENTENCE STRUCTURES IS USED.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	15	57.69	0	0.00	6	25.00	2	8.33
3 GOOD	11	42.31	20	80.00	18	75.00	16	66.67
4 EXCEL	0	0.00	5	20.00	0	0.00	5	20.83
5 BLANK	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.17
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

SOPHOMORE/JUNIOR WRITING PROGRAM -- MRS. ERESH , F PERIOD, ESSAY

05. TRANSITIONS ARE EFFECTIVELY USED.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	2	7.69	1	4.00	4	16.67	4	16.67
3 GOOD	24	92.31	18	72.00	15	62.50	9	37.50
4 EXCEL	0	0.00	6	24.00	5	20.83	11	45.83
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

06. THE VOCABULARY IS RICH AND VARIED.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	17	65.38	0	0.00	14	58.33	1	4.17
3 GOOD	8	30.77	23	92.00	8	33.33	15	62.50
4 EXCEL	1	3.85	2	8.00	2	8.33	8	33.33
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

07. CONCRETE AND SPECIFIC DETAILS ARE USED TO ILLUSTRATE POINTS.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
1 POOR	1	3.85	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
2 FAIR	9	34.62	1	4.00	9	37.50	2	8.33
3 GOOD	14	53.85	16	64.00	10	41.67	10	41.67
4 EXCEL	2	7.69	8	32.00	5	20.83	12	50.00
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

08. BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL TECHNIQUES ARE FOLLOWED.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	1	3.85	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.17
3 GOOD	8	30.77	0	0.00	17	70.83	11	45.83
4 EXCEL	17	65.38	25	100.00	7	29.17	12	50.00
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

SOPHOMORE/JUNIOR WRITING PROGRAM -- MRS. ERESH , F PERIOD, ESSAY

09. SHOWS CREATIVITY IN THE APPROACH TO AND HANDLING OF THE TOPIC.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	1	3.85	0	0.00	1	4.17	0	0.00
3 GOOD	24	92.31	21	84.00	20	83.33	14	58.33
4 EXCEL	1	3.85	4	16.00	3	12.50	10	41.67
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

10. ACCURATE PUNCTUATION.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	1	3.85	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.17
3 GOOD	9	34.62	3	12.00	3	12.50	13	54.17
4 EXCEL	16	61.54	22	88.00	21	87.50	10	41.67
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

11. ACCURATE CAPITALIZATION.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	1	3.85	1	4.00	0	0.00	1	4.17
3 GOOD	3	11.54	0	0.00	0	0.00	18	75.00
4 EXCEL	22	84.62	24	96.00	24	100.00	5	20.83
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

12. CORRECT SPELLING.

	SEPTEMBER		NOVEMBER		JANUARY		MARCH	
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
2 FAIR	4	15.38	1	4.00	1	4.17	3	12.50
3 GOOD	7	26.92	4	16.00	5	20.83	15	62.50
4 EXCEL	15	57.69	20	80.00	18	75.00	6	25.00
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

SOPHOMORE/JUNIOR WRITING PROGRAM -- MRS. ERESH , F PERIOD ESSAY

13. STANDARD USAGE.

RESPONSE	SEPTEMBER NUMBER	SEPTEMBER PERCENT	NOVEMBER NUMBER	NOVEMBER PERCENT	JANUARY NUMBER	JANUARY PERCENT	MARCH NUMBER	MARCH PERCENT
2 FAIR	1	3.85	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	12.50
3 GOOD	10	38.46	5	20.00	9	37.50	15	62.50
4 EXCEL	15	57.69	20	80.00	15	62.50	6	25.00
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

14. CORRECT SENTENCE STRUCTURE.

RESPONSE	SEPTEMBER NUMBER	SEPTEMBER PERCENT	NOVEMBER NUMBER	NOVEMBER PERCENT	JANUARY NUMBER	JANUARY PERCENT	MARCH NUMBER	MARCH PERCENT
2 FAIR	1	3.85	0	0.00	1	4.17	2	8.33
3 GOOD	10	38.46	3	12.00	3	12.50	15	62.50
4 EXCEL	15	57.69	22	88.00	20	83.33	7	29.17
TOTAL	26	100.00	25	100.00	24	100.00	24	100.00

MECHANICS/USAGE SKILLS, LEVELS 1-9

PUNCTUATION OBJECTIVES

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6	LEVEL 7	LEVEL 8	LEVEL 9
Punctuate asking & telling sentences								
	Form Contractions							
	Punctuate commanding exclamatory sentences							
	Commas in dates & place names							
		Commas between elements in a series						
		Hyphen in compound numbers						
			Quotes with speaker identified before and after					
			Commas for expressions that interrupt the sentence					
			Apostrophe in possessives					
				Commas w/certain introductory elements				
				Commas in compound sentences				
				Quotes w/interrupted speaker				
				Underline title of long works				
						Titles of short works w/quotes		
							Semi-Colon	
							Colon	
							Dash	
							Parenthesis	

CAPITALIZATION

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6	LEVEL 7	LEVEL 8	LEVEL 9
Pronoun I								
Sentence with a capital								
Names of person, days, months								
	Holidays & special places							
		Titles and geographical locations						

STANDARD USAGE

	Subject and object pronouns							
		Subject & verb agree						
		Possessive pronouns (their, its, your)						
				Proper syllabication at end of line				
						Pronouns agree w/ antecedent		
						Avoid negatives		
						Regular & irregular verbs		
							Placement of modifiers	
							Degree of adverbs and adjectives	

CORRECT SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Avoidance of sentence fragments & run-ons								

MECHANICS/USAGE TEST: SAMPLE PAGE

SAMPLE

LEVEL 5 - MECHANICS/USAGE TEST

524

1. Identify the conjunction in the following sentence.

   Pete will go on the trip, but John will stay home.

   A. on
   B. will
   C. but

2. Identify the prepositional phrase in the following sentence.

   My favorite season of the year is spring.

   A. My favorite
   B. of the year
   C. is spring

3. Identify the correct tense of the verb in the following sentence.

   Can you find some flowers in the woods?

   A. past
   B. present
   C. future

4. The word yesterday has been divided into syllables. Choose the correct syllabication.

   A. yes-ter-day
   B. ye-ster-day
   C. yest-er-day

Choose the sentence that is written correctly.

5. A. When it rains I stay indoors.
   B. When it rains, I stay indoors.
   C. When it rains I stay, indoors.

6. A. The boys rode their bicycles to the playground, and played a game of baseball.
   B. The boys rode their bicycles to the playground and, they played a game of baseball.
   C. The boys rode their bicycles to the playground, and they played a game of baseball.

7. A. "If it is raining out," said Mother, "you can't go to the park."
   B. "If it is raining out, said Mother, you can't go to the park."
   C. If it is raining out, "said Mother," you can't go to the park.

8. A. Have you read the book Benji?
   B. Have you read the book Benji?
   C. Have you read the book "Benji"?

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REPORT: MECHANICS/USAGE

ROBERT 13105 MRS ERESH DATE: 02/25/80
MECHANICS/USAGE, LEVEL 6, FORM 6 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REPORT

OBJECTIVES:	CORRECT	INCORRECT
1. RECOGNIZE NOUNS.	X	
2. RECOGNIZE VERBS.		X
3. RECOGNIZE ADVERBS.	X	
4. RECOGNIZE ADJECTIVES.		X
5. CORRECTLY USE SUBJECT AND OBJECT PRONOUNS.	X	
6. RECOGNIZE COORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS (AND, BUT, OR, NOR, FOR).	X	
7. CORRECTLY IDENTIFY THE SUBJECT AND VERB IN A SENTENCE.		X
8. CORRECTLY FORM CONTRACTIONS.	X	
9. RECOGNIZE VERB TENSE (PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE).	X	
10. IDENTIFY PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES.	X	
11. IDENTIFY/CORRECTLY PUNCTUATE ASKING/TELLING SENTENCES.		X
12. CORRECTLY PUNCTUATE COMMANDING/EXCLAMATORY SENTENCES.	X	
13. USE PROPER SYLLABICATION AT END OF LINE.	X	
14. USE HYPHEN IN COMPOUND NUMBERS.		X
15. CAPITALIZE THE PERSONAL PRONOUN "I".	X	
16. BEGIN EACH SENTENCE WITH A CAPITAL LETTER.	X	
17. USE A CAPITAL LETTER WITH NAMES OF PERSONS.	X	
18. USE A CAPITAL LETTER WITH DAYS AND MONTHS.	X	
19. CAPITALIZE HOLIDAYS.	X	
20. CAPITALIZE SPECIAL PLACES.	X	
21. USE COMMAS IN DATES.	X	
22. USE COMMAS IN PLACE NAMES.	X	
23. CAPITALIZE TITLES.	X	
24. CAPITALIZE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS.	X	
25. USE COMMAS BETWEEN ELEMENTS IN A SERIES.	X	
26. USE QUOTATION MARKS - SPEAKER IDENTIFIED BEFORE QUOTE.	X	
27. MAKE SUBJECT AND VERB AGREE.		X
28. USE POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS.	X	
29. USE COMMAS FOR EXPRESSIONS THAT INTERRUPT THE SENTENCE.	X	
30. USE QUOTATIONS WITH THE SPEAKER IDENTIFIED AFTER THE QUOTE.	X	
31. ADD 'S TO SINGULAR NOUNS TO SHOW POSSESSION.	X	
32. ADD ' TO PLURAL NOUNS ENDING IN S TO SHOW POSSESSION.	X	
33. ADD 'S TO PLURAL NOUNS NOT ENDING IN S TO SHOW POSSESSION.		X
34. USE COMMAS WHEN SENTENCE BEGINS WITH INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS.	X	
35. USE COMMAS IN COMPOUND SENTENCES.		X
36. USE PROPER PUNCTUATION FOR INTERRUPTED QUOTATIONS.		X
37. UNDERLINE THE NAMES OF BOOKS, PLAYS, PUBLICATIONS, ETC.		X

YOU ANSWERED 27 ITEMS CORRECTLY.

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DIAGNOSTIC SUMMARY: MECHANICS/USAGE

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS (FITCHBURG, MA.)
DIAGNOSTIC SUMMARY: STUDENTS WHO DID NOT ACHIEVE INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT MONITORING PROJECT OBJECTIVES

MECHANICS/USAGE — DATE: 02/25/80 — 13105 MRS ERESH

STUDENT'S NAME		01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	CORRECT
LINDA	65			X		X		X			X	X	X	X	X					X	X			X	X						X			X												(22) OUT OF 37
PATTY	64											X																				X			X	X					X							(32) OUT OF 37
WILLIAM	64			X	X	X	X		X			X			X						X	X		X											X			X	X	X							(23) OUT OF 37
CANDY	65	X	X	X	X		X						X	X					X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X		X		X	X	X							(16) OUT OF 37
ROBERT	66		X		X			X				X			X																X				X			X	X	X							(27) OUT OF 37
DARLENE	66		X		X	X						X		X	X								X			X				X		X			X	X	X	X	X							(23) OUT OF 37
MICHELE	65			X	X		X	X					X						X			X	X			X				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X								(21) OUT OF 37
BRENDA	64										X		X		;							X		X						X	X	X			X		X	X	X								(26) OUT OF 37
JON	64	X				X		X			X		X		X		X			X													X														(28) OUT OF 37
JOHN	65			X							X	X	X	X								X									X							X	X								(28) OUT OF 37
PENNY	65			X			X				X		X							X	X		X								X									X	X			X	X		(25) OUT OF 37
PATTY	65	X	X	X		X		X			X		X								X	X									X																(26) OUT OF 37
CHARLENE	66					X		X												X			X							X	X			X		X		X								(28) OUT OF 37
JIM	66					X				X		X								X			X							X				X				X		X	X						(27) OUT OF 37
PAUL	66				X	X	X			X		X										X	X							X	X			X	X				X	X							(23) OUT OF 37
CATHY	64		X	X			X					X								X		X									X							X				X	X					(26) OUT OF 37
TIM	64	X	X	X								X													X	X					X							X				X						(28) OUT OF 37
GREG	66		X			X	X				X	X									X		X				X	X				X							X				X	X				(24) OUT OF 37
MIKE	64				X							X													X					X			X	X					X									(30) OUT OF 37
# INCORRECT BY OBJECTIVE:		4	8	9	7	9	4	9	2	7	10	10	4	5	1	1	8	6	7	7	5	4	3	3	8	5	12	6	6	5	12	5	15	9	4												

OF STUDENTS TESTED (19)